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OUR INDIANS

A MIDNIGHT VISIT TO THE GREAT SOMEWHERE-OR-OTHER

DRAWN
& WRITTEN BY
L. D. BRADLEY



To Elizabeth
and Jack
Case.

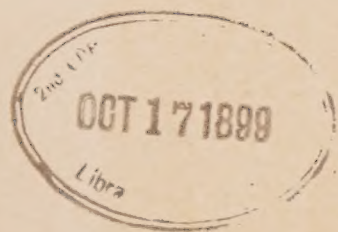
These pages were originally painted and scribbled to please a little girl by materializing some fancies with which she had amused herself and others. The theme was the growth of numerous breakfast-table conversations in which the imaginary adventures of the preceding night were agreeably dwelt upon. A brother and an uncle having been gradually admitted to the favored circle, the three became accustomed to spend what were popularly supposed to be their sleeping hours in some mystic realm known as the place where "Our Indians" are. Why these kindly beings should have happened to be Indians is a puzzle with which this recital has nothing to do. But the illusion grew upon those who shared in it, until the great Somewhere became almost a reality. The pictures served to bring a number of friends, big and little, into the charmed company, and in the belief that here and there about the world are others who would join in our mild diversions, we offer our experiences publicly.



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Hark! what means that horrid uproar,
Breaking through the poet's slumbers?
Whack! it has a sound like thunder
To his fired imagination.
For you see he's spent the evening
Writing yards and yards of poetry,
Poems of Tommy, poems of Willie,
And his throbbing brain feels somewhat
Like a stocking full of door-knobs;
And of course - but there, no matter!
Bang again! 'Tis someone calling,
Who alludes to him as Uncle,
Says 'tis midnight, and advises
Him to rise and get his things on;
For 'tis time to pay a visit,
Time to go and see Our Indians;
That, in fact, one of Our Indians
Is already waiting for us,
Waiting just outside to take us
Thro' the night, the cloud, the silence,
To the Wigwams of Our Indians,
In the great Somewhere-or-other.

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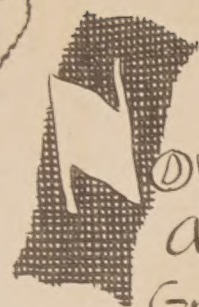
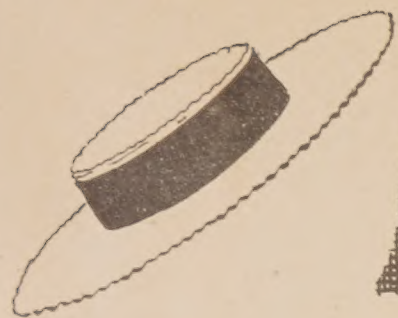
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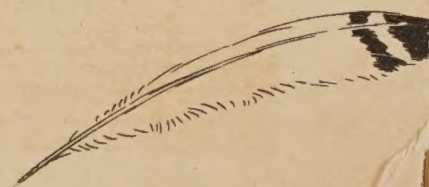
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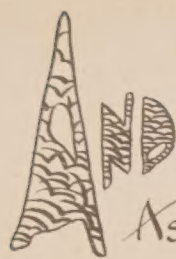


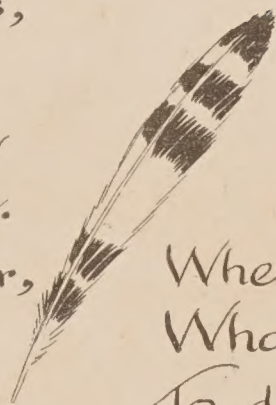


NOW the bard bounds from his bedstead,
Airy, graceful; grabs for clothing,
Grabs his dress-coat, somewhat dusty,
Grabs his faithful knickerbockers,
Remnant of his cycling outfit,
Model Ninety-three, and slightly
Small for him, price seven dollars.
Other things he also puts on,
Till, arrayed, he only needed
A tall hat to make him perfect.
Would you know why he omitted
So to finish off his costume?
'Twas because no tall hat had he,
None except the one he uses
For his model, and 'tis battered;
Furthermore, it does not fit him.
But we fear we're growing prosy.
In the hall his niece is ready,
So they pass into the darkness,
Where, close by, beside the horse-block,
Waits one of our Indians for them.





ND Our Indian, when he saw them,
Asked them how they did, and hoped that
They were feeling well and happy.
They returned these cordial wishes,
Told him they were glad to see him,
And the thing that made them happy
Was the thought of going with him.
Then, these pleasant greetings over,
Into the canoe they clambered,
Took the paddles and rose swiftly
To a point up near the steeple
Of the church upon the corner,



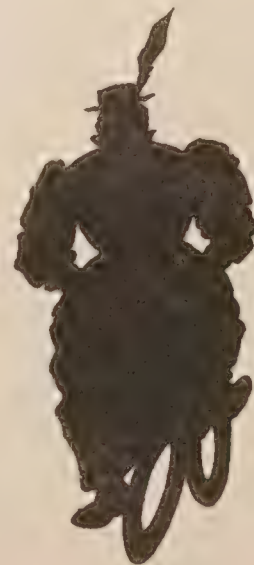
Where their seven-in-hand was ready.
Whoosh! We have as yet no language
To describe their speed as upward
From the sleeping town they vanished.
Soon the sun shone all about them,
And about them soared and circled
Many birds of odd appearance,
Birds, perhaps, the gentle reader
Will not recognize, since rarely
Are they seen on hats or bonnets;
For they soar afar and circle
In the great Somewhere-or-other.



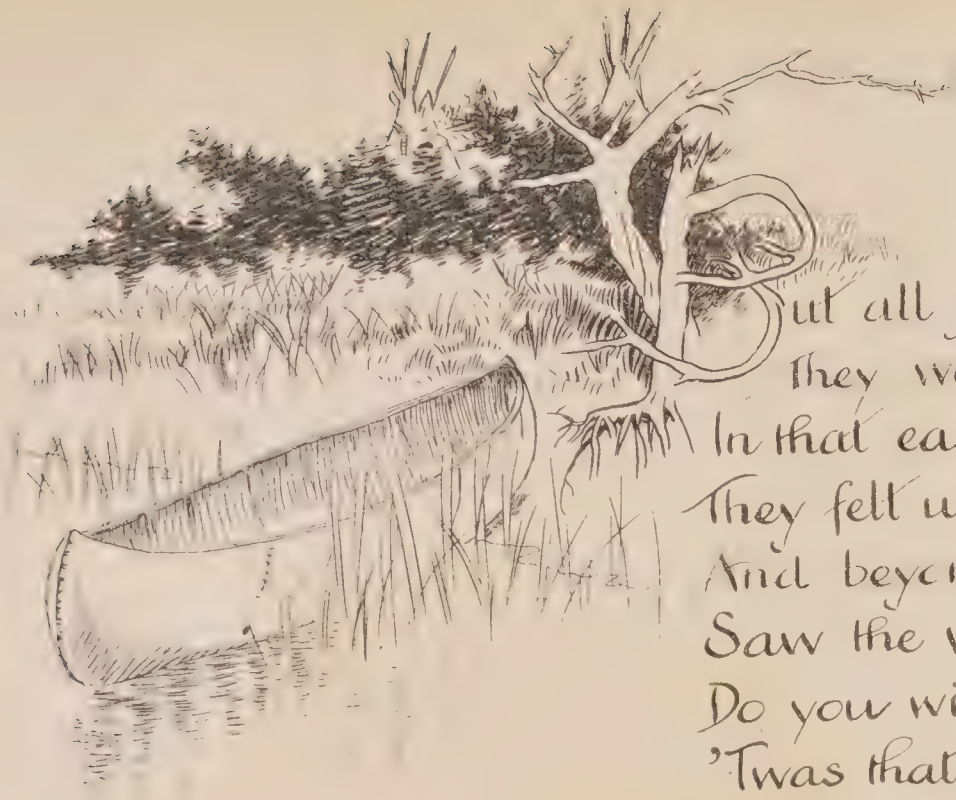




So this joyous aggregation
Journeyed far and journeyed farther.
And they most emphatically
Say at once that of all methods
Of annihilating distance,
This canoeing with Our Indians
Is the one that nearly suits them.
For they hear no voice of brakeman
Howling: "Brownville!" "Jones's Crossing!"
"Robinson!" or "Cabbage Hollow!"
And they could not, if they wished to,
Purchase chewing-gum or peanuts.
Underneath no cable jangles,
On their toes steps no conductor,
Nor does starting nor does stopping
Cause them inward disarrangement.
No block pavement pounds their persons
And deteriorates their language.
And they do not think of punctures,
(Tho' they did on one occasion)
And no ponderous person meets them,
On the road's wrong side and wabbling.



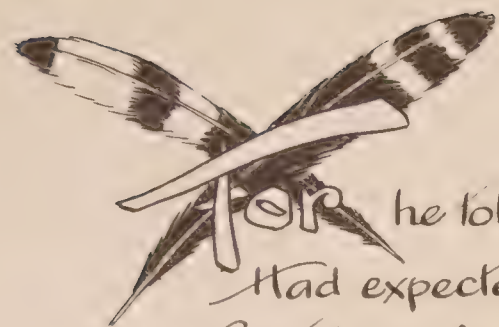




But all journeys end, and just as
They were wishing they could travel
In that easy way forever,
They felt under them a river;
And beyond them, through an archway,
Saw the wigwams of Our Indians.
Do you wish to know what river
'Twas that showed this scene of beauty?
They reply, they'd like to tell you,
But they can't; they promised not to.
On the beach their friends are waiting,
And a joyous meeting follows.
Or, at least, 'twas wholly joyful
Till the great Chief of Our Indians
Said to Looking-Glass, another:
"I don't seem to see Jack with them."
Then the poet said: "Excuse me,
But I think I can explain it."
And in simple prose he did so,
While Our Indians punctuated
His discourse with groans of sorrow.





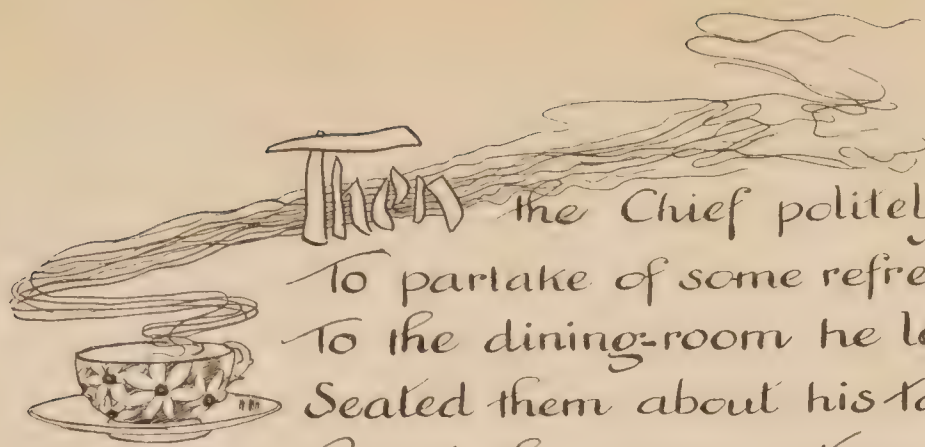


For he told them that his nephew
Had expected to be with them,
But had been behaving badly,
And they had to come without him.
Bad behavior - moaned the poet -
Was his constant occupation.
Could they bear - did they desire
To be told what 'twas he uttered,
What it was he called his uncle?
(Let us whisper for the moment)
'Rubberneck' was what he called him.
At this doleful news Our Indians
Almost wept, but one among them,
'Twas the Chief, made answer sternly:
"This is sad; 'tis wellnigh awful!
Jack must be sent for and punished;
I must personally do it."
Then he summoned two Bad Indians,
Bade them go for Jack that instant
And produce him for correction.

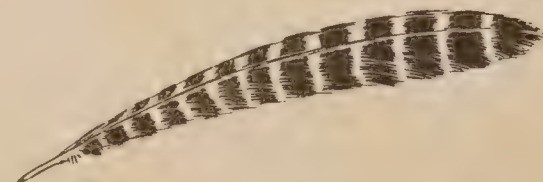


Then those two Bad Indians started,
Did as they had been directed.
Two Good Indians would have sorrowed
To be sent on such an errand,
But these bad ones fairly snickered.
They were of the tribe of No-good,
And did odd jobs for Our Indians.
When they on their way had started,
Then into a handy wigwam
He who tells this simple story
With his niece retired to slick up,
Brush the hair and fix the necktie.
'Twas unusually easy
With a Looking-Glass so handy.

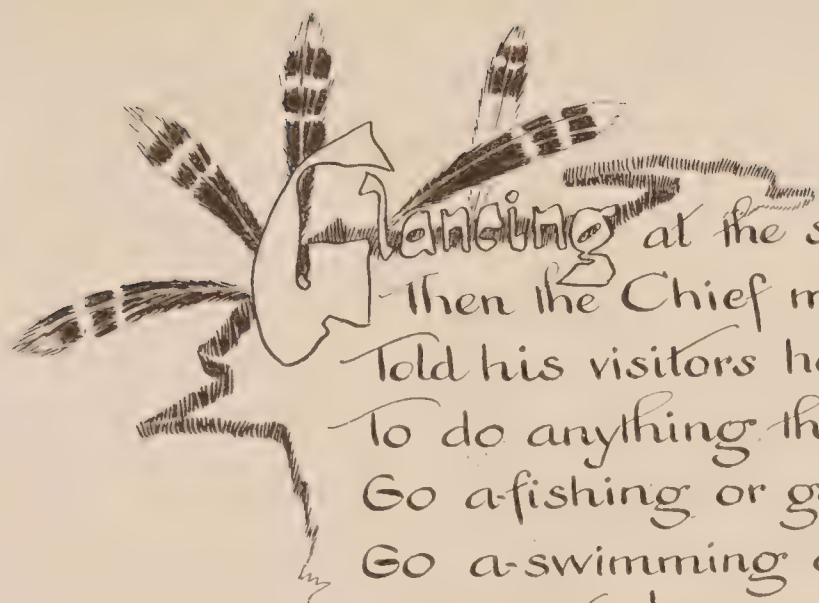




Then the Chief politely begged them
To partake of some refreshment;
To the dining-room he led them,
Seated them about his table,
Poured the coffee out and asked them
If they took both milk and sugar.
Then, in course of conversation,
A peculiar tale he told them;
Said his son - Good Little Indian -
Had a queer hallucination,
Told each morning of his travels
Far away to see his White Men,
Far away while all were sleeping.
And they could not make him own up
That 'twas all a dream or story,
But he stuck to his queer notion.
This the guests thought very curious,
And they naturally said so.
But the son - Good Little Indian -
Merely grinned; he didn't mind it.
So with friendly talk and story
Passed away a pleasant hour.

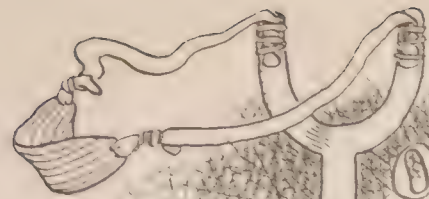




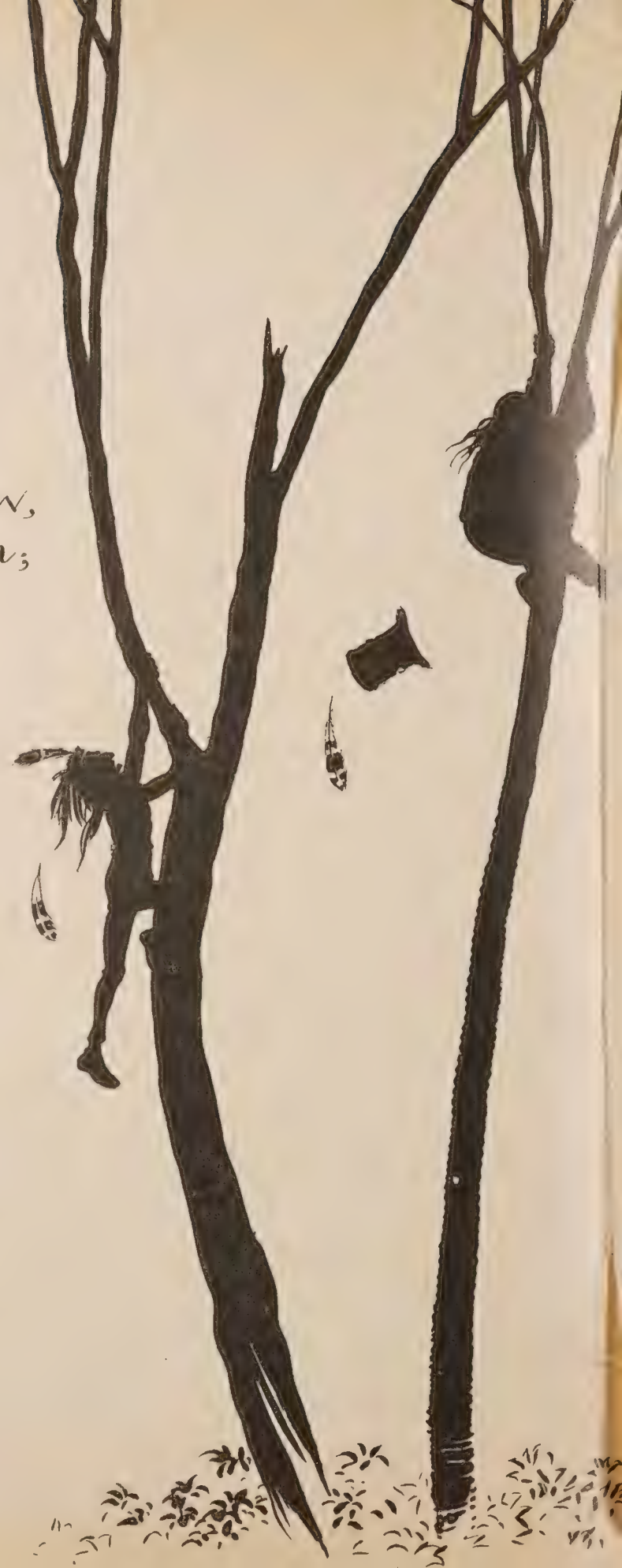


Hanging at the shrinking shadows,
Then the Chief most courteously
Told his visitors he wished them
To do anything they'd like to;
Go a-fishing or go hunting,
Go a-swimming or a-sailing,
Go for turtles or pond-lilies.
And his guests preferred the latter.
So the Chief gave one short whistle,
And in just about a minute
Two trained whooping-cranes were ready
Ready saddled by Our Indians.
And the visitors were quickly
Speeding lightly through the marshes.
And the poet felt so jocund
That he improvised a ditty;
And a large cigar he lighted,
Lighted a cigar and puffed it.
'Twas one that a friend had giv'n him;
But let's not pursue the subject,
Nor anticipate disaster.





YOU would, in the meantime, maybe,
Like to know how scared those Indians
Who, to find the poet's nephew,
Sailed away upon their air-shoes
To the dark and sleeping city.
Well, they found and seized that nephew,
Made him dress and go back with them;
Did just as they had been told to.
But no more they grinned and snickered,
For the nephew still continued
On that course of rude behavior
That his uncle had regretted,
Much annoyed those two Bad Indians,
Made their lives, indeed, two burdens.
But at last they reached the mountain
Where one always lands from air-shoes,
And had hardly set their feet there
When a horrid growling shocked them,
And a bear came lumbering towards them!
Then like lightning shinned those Indians
Up two trees and left the nephew
All alone to face the music.

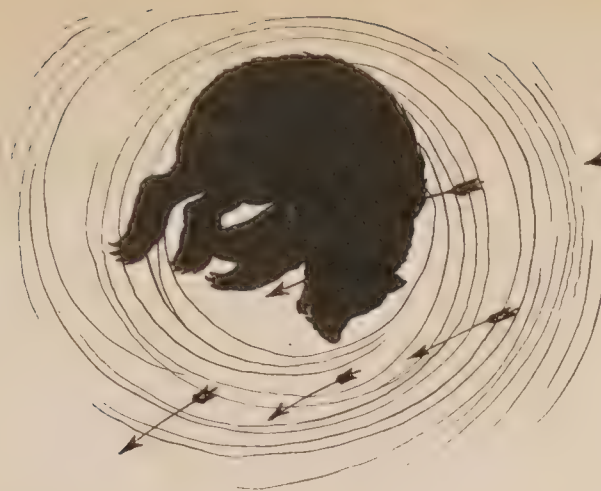






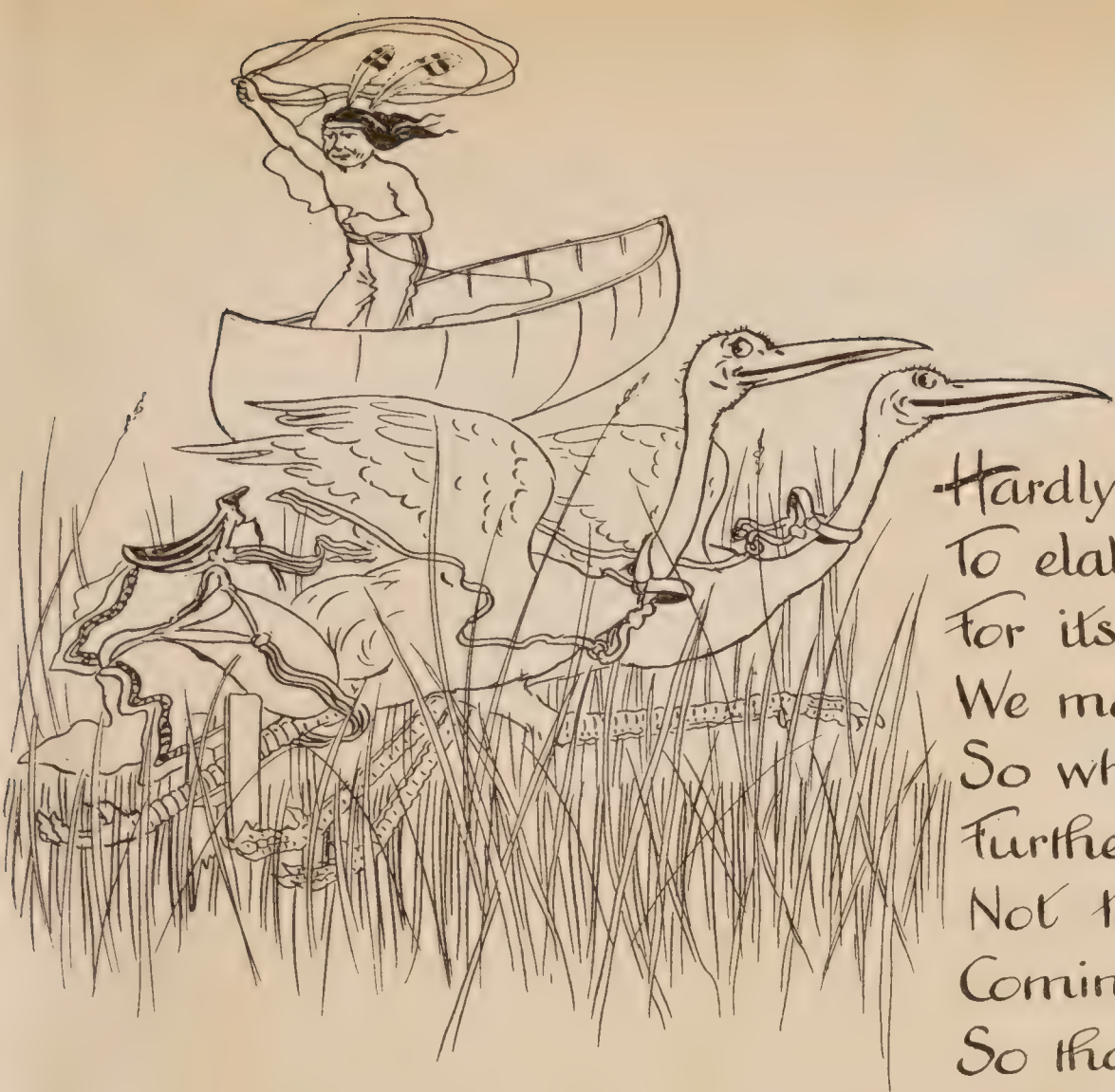






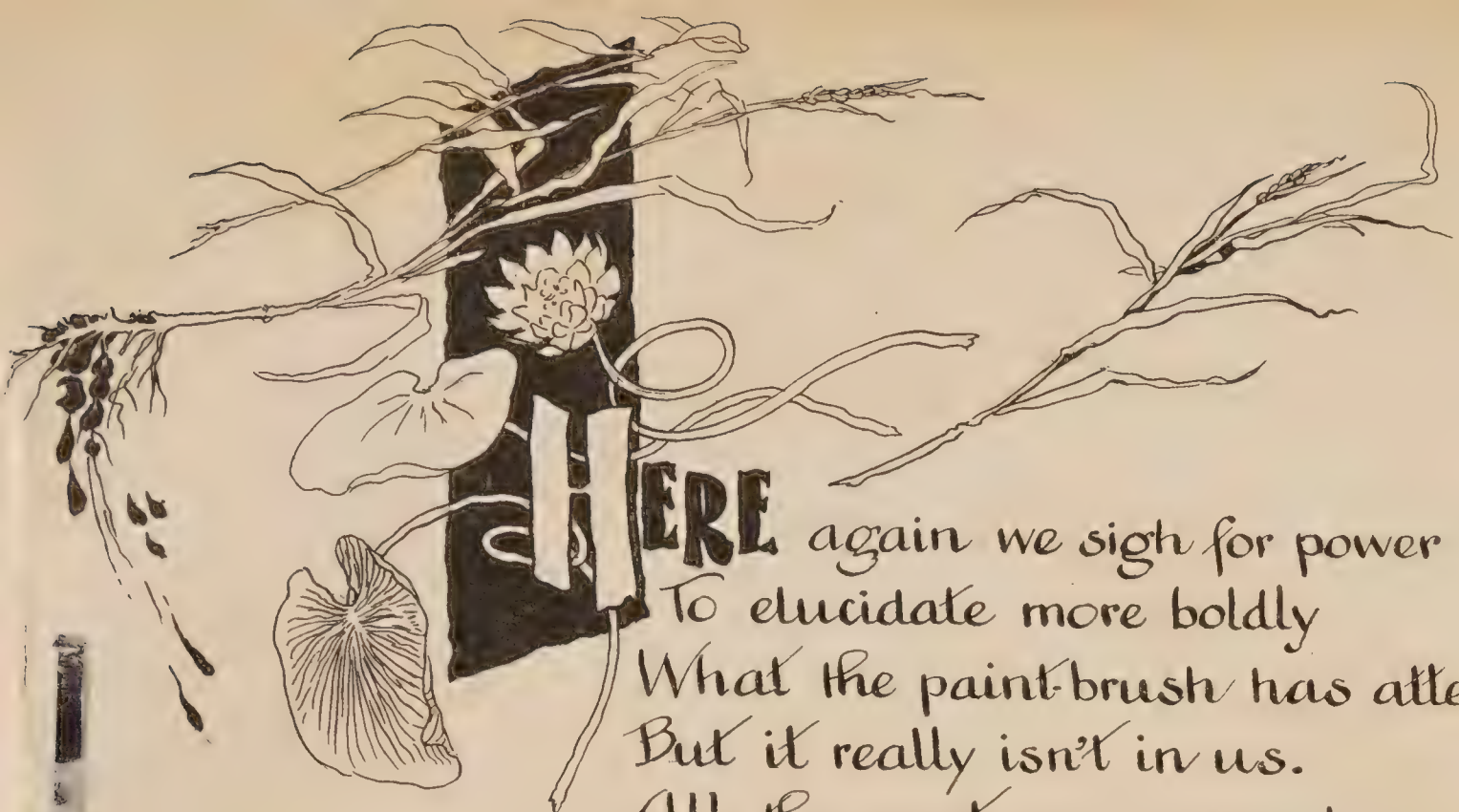
BUT while these exciting moments
On that mountain side were passing,
What of those who gaily cantered
Thro' the marsh to seek pond-lilies?
Now, alas! a gloomy chapter
Throws its shadow on our story.
For as o'er the quiet grasses
Floated far the poet's cigar smoke,
And while soared aloft his carol,
Those two cranes behaved most queerly.
You would surely have concluded
That to smoking they objected,
Or that music did not sooth them.
For they coughed and kicked so fiercely
That their riders, after turning
Summersaults in swift rotation,
Found themselves most insecurely
On the atmosphere reclining;
While beneath—but wait a moment;
Let's collect ourselves and swallow,
For the next page tells the story,
Tells how they at last alighted.



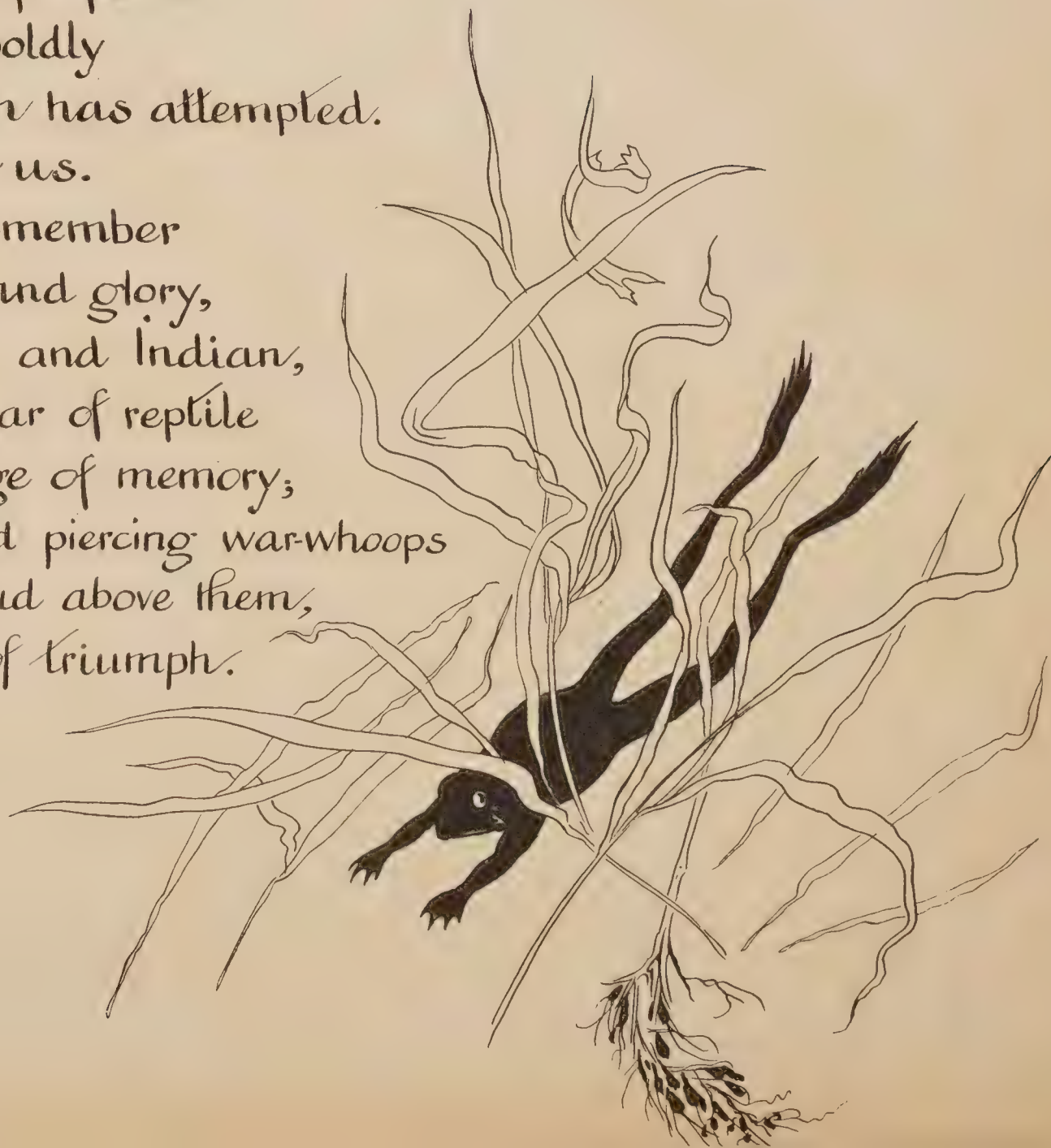


Hardly any verse is needed
To elaborate this picture.
For itself it speaks out loudly;
We may almost say it bellows.
So why pen a further jingle?
Further, that is, than to warn you
Not to overlook what's coming,
Coming through the air to fix things,
So that there shall be no sudden
Climax of a tragic ending;
Coming to take all precautions
Lest this plain unvarnished story
May collapse and leave no sequel.

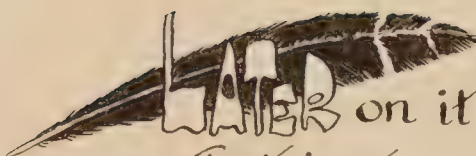





HERE again we sigh for power
To elucidate more boldly
What the paint-brush has attempted.
But it really isn't in us.
All the poet can remember
Is a whirl of mud and glory,
Just a haze of grass and Indian,
Merely one vast smear of reptile
Right across the page of memory;
Gurgling groans and piercing war-whoops
He still hears, and loud above them,
Last of all, a howl of triumph.







LATER on it happened strangely
That just as our Little Indian
Was returning with his monster,
Jack the same way chanced to travel.
He was lugging home the grizzly
That he'd vanquished on the mountain.
And the joyful tribe received them
With excessive jubilation.
And the Chief, in speech emphatic,
Made indefinite postponement
Of Jack's promised flagellation;
But remarked that if he ever
Got his hands on those two Indians
Who shinned up the trees so blithely,
He would—but hold on! don't let us
Fill this harmless tale with horror.
Though it must be said, in passing,
That as his wierd threat he uttered,
The Chief ground his teeth and whistled.

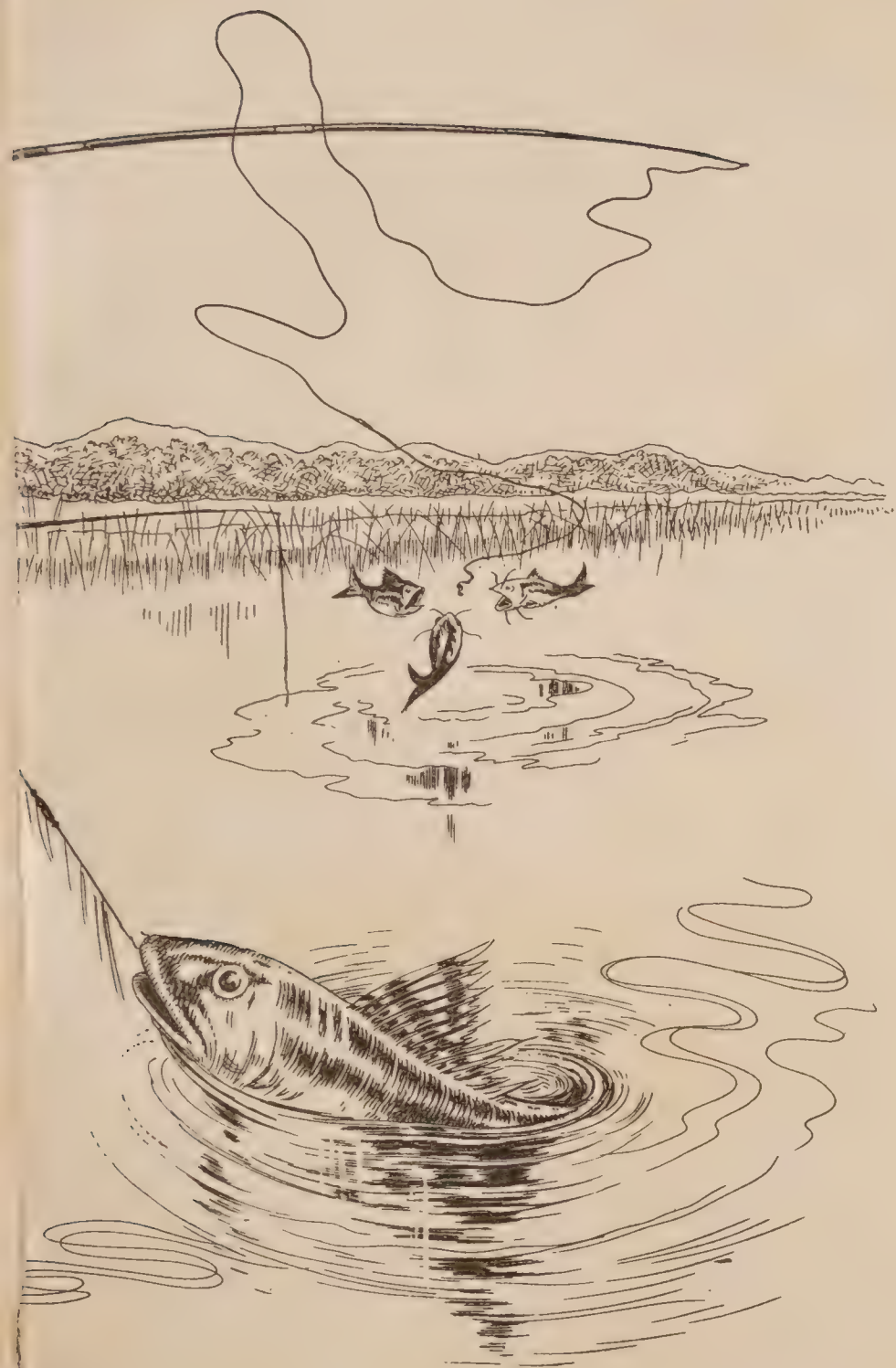


THEN the poet and his party,
Wishing to return the kindness
Which on every hand had met them,
Issued general invitations
To a Vaudeville performance.
And perhaps 'twould not be modest
To record in this connection
The success that crowned their efforts.
Still, this little tale is history,
And 'twould not be right to mar it
By omitting facts important;
And we know that just as others
Say: "'Twas in the World's Fair season,"
Or, "The year of the great earthquake,"
So Our Indians date their doings
From the famous "Vaudeville Summer."
Let us turn the page and witness
An inadequate reflection
Of that pleasant little function.









When the Vaudeville was over
Just a little time was left them;
So the guests all went a-fishing,
Went a-fishing from the turtle
Kept and trained for such a purpose.
We could linger o'er this fishing,
And 'twould please us much to tell you
All about each bite and nibble.
But we must restrain our fervor,
Pausing only to make mention
Of one circumstance peculiar,
Namely: that the fish they captured
Were in every instance bigger
Than the others that escaped them,
Which is really most unusual.

But the moments passed so quickly
Barely time was left for travel,
Barely time to travel homeward.
Still, the Chief was always ready
With a way to make things easy,
And he said: "Bring out the eagle!"
Now this eagle had a record,
Seventeen miles in sixteen seconds.
And for fear it might be stormy
The coupe' was ordered ready.
So the guests now started homeward,
Started amid cheers that lasted
But a moment, for the eagle
Flew so swiftly that Our Indians
Vanished as a dream deserts us
When with one loud thump we waken,
When out of our bed we've fallen,
Fallen and disturbed our slumbers.









one slight mishap troubled
The serene course of their journey.

Now the Indian who drove them
Liked to show his fancy driving,

And in shaving the tall steeple,
Of the church upon the corner,

His canoe received a puncture.
Then the air was full of people,

Full of flowers and of feathers.
Everybody there lost something;
Ev'n the eagle lost his balance.

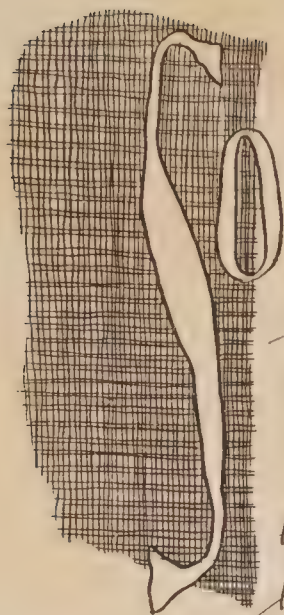
All but one - Good Little Indian -

Lost their presence of mind completely.
But that one - Good Little Indian -

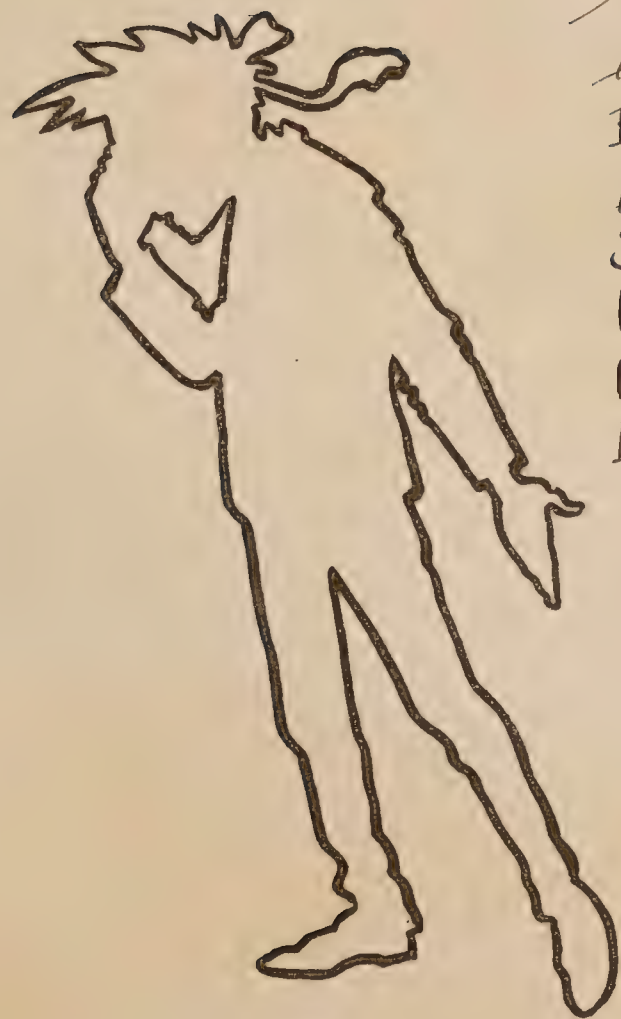
Caught the outfit as 'twas falling;
Scooped the party up so lightly

That they scarcely knew what saved them.





their visit ended safely.
And a little after sunrise
At the horse-block they alighted,
Reached it just before the milkman,
And retired to their chambers.
And of all our whole narration
This part is by far the saddest.
All the rest is bright and joyful,
But the coming home is dismal.
And it makes the poet sorrow.
So he hopes you will excuse him
If he lingers here no further,
Let's this theme escape unnoticed,
Drops his harp and looks dejected.



LATER on, at breakfast meeting,
It is pleasant to talk over
Pleasant things we've done together.
It is cheerful to remember
Cheerful scenes we've viewed together.
And there's humor in it also,
For the sniffs of open doubters,
And the sneers of unbelievers,
And the callous inattention
Of some folks who'd like to join us
But are not allowed to do so,
Not allowed to see Our Indians,
All these things, we say, are funny,
And they make us very mirthful.

But their ignorance we pity,
And we really must take with us
All our friends to see Our Indians,
Where the sun is always shining,
And the fish are always biting,
Where all things are as they should be,
In the great Somewhere-or-other.

The End







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